

Johnson's Institute
Driftwood Head, 20 miles Southwest of Austin, Texas

HABS No. Tex-398

HABS
TEX
105-DRIF
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS
- WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Texas-3

Historic American Buildings Survey
Bartlett Cocke, District Officer
615 Maverick Bldg., San Antonio, Texas

JAS
105-112

JOHNSON'S INSTITUTE

30 miles southwest of Austin on Driftwood Road,
Hays County, Texas.Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Tom Kemp, Driftwood Road, Hays County, Texas.Date of Erection: 1852-53Architect: UnknownBuilder: John Roy, stone mason employed by Prof. Thomas JohnsonPresent Condition: FairNumber of Stories: TwoMaterials of Construction: Native limestone, cypress, pine and cedar.Other Existing Records: NoneAdditional Data:

The plan of this two story building is "L" shaped; the building faces practically South. It reflects two influences: Monterey Colonial and New England Colonial. A Mount Vernon type of two story porch had been planned across the entire south front, but Prof. Johnson died before this idea became a reality. The first portion of the building, that part facing south, was completed in 1852; it consisted of two rooms and a stair hall on the first floor and a large class room on the second floor. Each room on the first floor had a fireplace; the room on the second floor had two fireplaces, one at each end.

Immediately on completion of the first unit the wing facing east was added, which consisted of three large rooms, a bath room and a west porch on each floor. Interior flooring is random width pine, excepting floor in north room and bathroom on first floor which is flagstone. First floor porch floor is flagstone; second floor porch floor is cedar. Joists, porch columns, lintels and sills are of cedar; window and door frames are cypress. This wing contains four fireplaces, two on each floor, the mantles of

which are very plain.

Roof is pitched approximately four to twelve and was originally covered with hand split cypress shingles, later covered with galvanized iron. The building is approximately fifty feet across the south and one hundred feet across the east; first floor ceiling height is approximately twelve feet; second floor ceiling height is approximately nine feet.

The builder of this building and founder of the school was Prof. Thomas Johnson, a native of Virginia, who came to Texas about 1844. He taught school in Lockhart and Webberville, then founded this school; the school included all grades from primer through college. In 1852, the first year, the school's enrollment was forty students; in 1872, the school closed, the enrollment was two hundred. Students took active part in all labor about the place, supplied plenty of game for the larder, which was a very enjoyable and comparatively simple chore, as the country abounded with ample wild life.

Originally there were fifteen or twenty single room cabins east of the main building which were used for mens' dormitories. None of these remain. The young women, girls and the smaller boys lived in the main building.

Much of this information was furnished by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Kemp, present owners who reside in the old building.

Author: *Bartlett Cocke*
Bartlett Cocke, Dist. Officer

Date: June 16, 1937

-TW

7/26/37